

## Pastor's Corner

*The Little Things of Life*

February 10, 2010

Dear Friend,

This morning I read a prophecy of Christ in the book of Isaiah: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." So when He is oppressed and afflicted, He is silent. And did you notice that it says twice that He didn't open His mouth? We see this prophecy fulfilled in Matthew: "Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus remained silent." "When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, 'Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?' But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor." And to my amazement as well. I have such respect for someone who can be silent, who can refuse to open their mouths in the face of insult, lies, gossip, and falsehood. I really look up to those people, because I don't keep my mouth shut. Mine is the first to open in reply, whether it's to defend self, or to use sarcasm, wit, argument, or just plain facts to justify self. But here we see Jesus Christ, in the face of outright lies that could result in torture and death for Him, opening not His mouth.

Though it was unbelievably hard for Christ to remain silent in His situation, it shouldn't be so difficult in my situation. The things that get a response from me are so harmless and benign that there is no comparison with Christ's circumstances. A wrong part ordered, an annoying phone call from a telemarketer, a person holding up the checkout line while their husband keeps looking for that sauce – if I do keep my mouth shut it doesn't mean my mind is not starting to boil over with frustration and angry words.

I'm beginning to realize that God is not so interested in me being Christ-like and quiet in some big test of my life, but in the little tests every single day. "It is the little things of life that develop the spirit and determine the character. Those who neglect the little things will not be prepared to endure severe tests when they are brought to bear upon them. Remember that the character building is not finished till life ends. Every day a good or bad brick is placed in the structure. You are either building crookedly or with the exactness and correctness that will make a beautiful temple for God. Therefore, in looking for great things to do, neglect not the little opportunities that come to you day by day. He who neglects the little things, and yet flatters himself that he is ready to do wonderful things for the Master, is in danger of failing altogether, Life is made up, not of great sacrifices and of wonderful achievements, but of little things." *In Heavenly Places*, page 226.

God worked with Jeremiah on this same point. Jeremiah was fussing and whining to God about how all the wicked seem to prosper, and God told him to focus on his own life, and stop worrying about the wicked. His spiritual strength was so weak he could even keep up with the wicked, and God had much bigger plans for him! "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?" The lesson given to the prophet of old may well come home to you and me today. If we neglect the minor tasks of life, how can we undertake the greater responsibilities that may come to us? If we succumb to the smaller temptations of everyday life, how can we overcome in the greater crises of life? If we cannot endure the lesser troubles of life, how can we withstand the terrible tribulations that will yet come upon us? And finally, if we fail to meet the situations of the present day with faith and trust, how will we be able to stand the almost unendurable hardships and almost overmastering delusions that will come upon us during the "time of trouble"?

Next week we'll continue our discussion and look at ways to keep silent in the "little things" that we encounter every single day.

Make time for God's Word today! We're praying for you!

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